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We're told that the winds of political change have come to Washington. President-elect Obama has promised to govern from the center, to be the President of the whole nation. I certainly hope that is the case. But his record as a Senator hasn't suggested moderation. And with large majorities in both the House and Senate, it is difficult to believe that Democrats will be able to restrain themselves from pursuing a liberal, tax-and-spend agenda that will harm Americans all across the nation.

The potential for a sharp left turn is especially great on issues that go through the House Ways and Means Committee. President-elect Obama appears to be sticking with his promise to raise taxes, a move that threatens to exacerbate our current economic crisis. He has promised to "fix NAFTA" and, echoing the position of Speaker Pelosi, continues to oppose a fair trade agreement with Colombia. Higher taxes and anti-trade policies failed miserably during the Great Depression, and they shouldn't be tried again—on any scale—during this crisis. Meanwhile, while avoiding reforming our unsustainable entitlement programs, the Democratic majority will likely push for a trillion-dollar, government-run health insurance program, which would inevitably lead to higher taxes on small businesses and workers, and longer delays for medical care. Ways and Means will clearly be the major battleground for our fiscal future.

I am running to be the leading Republican on this committee because I firmly believe we need common sense, conservative solutions to the serious economic challenges facing America today. While we will work with the Democratic majority as Republicans where there are areas of agreement, we simply can't just 'go along to get along.' We need to fight to renew the 2001-2003 tax relief and bring about tax reform that will truly benefit American workers, small businesses, and families. We need to redouble our efforts to show that open markets are vital to economic growth and job creation here at home. We need to demonstrate that we're the fiscally responsible party by advocating for reforms to our entitlement programs. These programs are growing at an unsustainable rate and promise to devastate our economy when borrowing is no longer viable and the bill comes due. And we need to champion consumer-driven health care reforms that focus on making coverage and medical care more affordable for individuals and families.

We need to raise the level of public debate in this country, and as a means of doing that, I have created a new section on my website that articulates the complex but crucial issues facing the Ways & Means Committee in the 111th Congress. I invite you to visit [the new site](#) to review my

in-depth vision for how we can accomplish these goals in a conservative fashion.

After a second tough election cycle, Republicans have an opportunity to rebuild. Exit polls from this month's election indicate that we're still a center-right nation. The American people have not rejected conservative principles, but are angry that, too often, governing Republicans did. As Republicans, we must rededicate ourselves to the lower tax, smaller government ideals that led to a modern conservative movement, swept President Reagan into office, and ignited an unprecedented period of economic prosperity. As Democrats take control of both ends of Pennsylvania Avenue, I am committed to fighting for these bedrock conservative principles on the Ways and Means Committee.